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Paper No. 4

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JUL 30 2002

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Denny Jaeger
Application No. 10/054,277
Filed: January 24, 2002
Attorney Docket No. 4207

: DECISION DISMISSING PETITION

This is a decision on the letter accompanying duplicate application papers received by facsimile on December 19, 2001, which is being treated as a petition requesting that the above-identified application be accorded a filing date of October 24, 2001.

It is noted that the original application papers were received January 24, 2002 and have been assigned application No. 10/054,277. Duplicate application papers were received by facsimile on December 19, 2001, however, since the duplicate application papers were received by facsimile, they are not entitled to a filing date. See 37 CFR 1.6(d) and 37 CFR 1.8. Accordingly, the duplicate application papers received by facsimile on December 19, 2001, have been placed in application No. 10/054,277.

Petitioner indicates that this application was mailed by first class mail to the Office on October 24, 2001. Petitioner requests the application be given a filing date of, or just after, the original mailing date of October 24, 2001.

The evidence and arguments submitted by petitioner has been considered; however, they are not convincing that this application was, in fact, received in the Office on October 24, 2001, or anytime prior to January 24, 2002.

35 U.S.C. 21(a) provides that:

The Director may by rule prescribe that any paper or fee required to be filed in the Patent and Trademark Office will be considered filed in the Office on the date on which it was deposited with the United States Postal Service or would have been deposited with the United States Postal Service but for postal service interruptions or emergencies designated by the Director.

The Director may, but is not required to, accept the mailing date as the filing date. The Director has determined that only the "Express Mail" procedure can be used for this purpose because the use of "Express Mail" provides very specific identifying information in advance which establishes both the date of mailing and the particular papers being filed.

Because the filing date of an application is much more critical than the filing date of papers accepted under 37 CFR 1.8, the USPTO promulgated a separate rule, 37 CFR 1.10, which sets forth a specific procedure which must be followed in order to establish the filing date as the date of deposit with the United States Postal Service (USPS) instead of the date of receipt in the Office.

The procedure in 37 CFR 1.10 requires the use of the "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service of the USPS. Correspondence sent by the "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service is considered filed in the Office on the "date-in" entered by the USPS. If the USPS deposit date cannot be determined, the correspondence will be accorded the date of receipt in the Office as the filing date. If the procedure is not followed, applicants bear the risk of any delay in the delivery of the application papers to the Office.

In the instant petition, there is no allegation that the application papers deposited on October 24, 2001, with the USPS as first class mail to the Office, were deposited in compliance with the "Express Mail" procedures set forth in 37 CFR 1.10. Petitioner had the option of depositing the application papers in "Express Mail" service on October 24, 2001, in order to obtain the benefits of 37 CFR 1.10. Had petitioner followed the procedure set forth in 37 CFR 1.10, the application could have been accorded a filing date as of the date of deposit in "Express Mail." Thus, petitioner could have avoided the instant predicament merely by following the procedures established by the Director. Instead, petitioner chose to deposit the application papers in first class mail and, as such, assumed the risk of any delay in the delivery to the Office. Petitioner's failure to take advantage of the established procedures is not a justification for accepting a date based upon the October 24, 2001 mailing of the instant application papers by first class mail as the filing date of the above-identified application. Therefore, the application is only entitled to the January 24, 2002 receipt date as the filing date of the application.

The best evidence of when particular application papers were actually received by the USPTO is a postcard receipt containing a specific itemization of all the items being submitted. See MPEP 503. In the absence of a postcard receipt indicating the receipt in the USPTO of the application papers on an earlier date, the USPTO must rely on the Official record, which indicates that the instant application papers were not received in the USPTO until January 24, 2002.

In view of the above, the petition is dismissed. No petition fee is required.

The application is being returned to Initial Patent Examination Division for further processing with a filing date of January 24, 2002.

Telephone inquiries specific to this matter should be directed to the undersigned at (703) 306-5586.



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